



SENATOR JEFF PLALE
SEVENTH SENATE DISTRICT

CHAIR
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, UTILITIES, ENERGY, AND RAIL

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 7882
MADISON, WI 53707-7882

800-361-5487 - MADISON
414-744-1444 - MILWAUKEE
SEN.PLALE@LEGIS.WISCONSIN.GOV

**Testimony of Senator Jeff Plale
Senate Bill 543
Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism, Forestry, and Natural
Resources
Thursday, April 1, 2010**

Thank you Chairman Holperin and members of the committee for your consideration of Senate Bill 543.

This legislation creates a special class of distinguishing license plates available only to Military Order of Purple Heart veterans who are also eligible for handicapped/disabled license plates. Purple Heart veterans will have the opportunity to obtain a license plate with both the Purple Heart Medal logo embossment and the handicapped/disabled logo embossment instead of having to choose between the two. Also, a surviving spouse may obtain a special group plate for persons awarded the Purple Heart medal; however, they may not obtain the parking privileges reserved for disabled persons.

I ask the committee members to support SB 543 in order to show our gratitude to those who risked their lives for the freedom of our country.

Thank you for hearing my testimony on SB 543. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.





WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY
Christine Sinicki
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON LABOR

Senate Bill 543; Bud's Law; April 1, 2010

The story of this bill begins with Erwin "Bud" Bessler, an 88 year old veteran in my district. Mr. Bessler is an extraordinary man who was wounded in action in World War II and awarded the medal of the Purple Heart. Since the war, Mr. Bessler has worked ceaselessly to help other veterans, particularly his fellow members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. One of his hopes on their behalf has been to create a disabled license plate especially for Purple Heart veterans. He asked Senator Plale and I to help him achieve this goal, and so we have introduced Senate Bill 543.

SB 543 creates a special class of veterans license plates available only to Military Order of Purple Heart (MOPH) veterans. Since a Purple Heart veteran by definition has sustained bodily injury in combat, the likelihood is greater than for other veterans that they have a physical disability. As a result, many Purple Heart veterans are already eligible for disabled license plates. Under the bill, Purple Heart veterans will have the opportunity to obtain plates that include both the Purple Heart Medal embossment and the disabled embossment on the same plate. Currently, these Purple Heart veterans must choose one or the other.

Under the bill, a Purple Heart veteran must present certifications of membership in the Military Order of the Purple Heart and of injury from the federal VA to the WisDOT. Once shown eligible, the Purple Heart veteran will be able to obtain one set of the Purple Heart/Disabled plates. Also, under SB 543, the surviving spouse of a Purple Heart veteran may continue to use the special Purple Heart/Disabled plates.

Our Purple Heart veterans have demonstrated the highest level of valor in service to our country. Their spirit of service should inspire the rest of us. Bud's Law license plates will help these veterans be recognized for their service by acting as a visible reminder of the sacrifice these brave men and women have made on behalf of all of us.

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